

U.S. Patent Application No. 10/532,750  
Amendment dated March 5, 2008  
Reply to Office Action of December 6, 2007

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**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (Currently amended) A method for producing a tantalum or niobium powder in which a metal salt containing tantalum or niobium is reduced in a diluent salt to obtain a tantalum or niobium powder,

wherein the total percentage of moisture in the metal salt and the diluent salt is 0.2% by mass or less as determined by the Karl Fisher Fischer method based on an amount of moisture generated by heating the metal salt and the diluent salt to 600°C, minus the total percentage of said moisture as determined by the Karl Fischer method at 200° C.

2. (Currently amended) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 1, wherein the diluent salt is potassium fluoride or a mixture containing potassium fluoride, and the moisture percentage in potassium fluoride alone is 0.15% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl Fisher Fischer method.

3. (Currently amended) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 1, wherein the diluent salt is potassium chloride or a mixture containing potassium chloride, and the moisture percentage in potassium chloride alone is 0.05% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl Fisher Fischer method.

4. (Currently amended) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 1, wherein the metal salt is tantalum potassium fluoride, and the moisture percentage in tantalum

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potassium fluoride alone is 0.1% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl ~~Fisher~~ Fischer method.

5. (Currently amended) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 1, wherein the metal salt is niobium potassium fluoride, and the moisture percentage in potassium fluoride alone is 0.1% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl ~~Fisher~~ Fischer method.

6. (Withdrawn) An anode for an electrolytic capacitor comprising the metal powder produced by the method of claim 1.

7. (Withdrawn) A method for evaluating a metal salt containing tantalum or niobium used for producing a tantalum or niobium powder, wherein a moisture percentage in a metal salt is measured based on an amount of moisture which is generated by heating the metal salt to 600°C or more.

8. (Withdrawn) A method for evaluating a diluent salt used for producing a tantalum or niobium powder, wherein a moisture percentage in a diluent salt is measured based on an amount of moisture which is generated by heating the diluent salt to 600°C or more.

9. (New) A method for producing a tantalum or niobium powder in which a metal salt containing tantalum or niobium is reduced in a diluent salt to obtain a tantalum or niobium powder,

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wherein the total percentage of moisture based on crystal water and absorbed water in the metal salt and the diluent salt is 0.2% by mass or less as determined by the Karl Fischer method based on an amount of moisture measured after first removing moisture at 200° C and then generated by heating the metal salt and the diluent salt to 600°C.

10. (New) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 9, wherein the diluent salt is potassium fluoride or a mixture containing potassium fluoride, and the moisture percentage in potassium fluoride alone is 0.15% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl Fischer method.

11. (New) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 9, wherein the diluent salt is potassium chloride or a mixture containing potassium chloride, and the moisture percentage in potassium chloride alone is 0.05% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl Fischer method.

12. (New) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 9, wherein the metal salt is tantalum potassium fluoride, and the moisture percentage in tantalum potassium fluoride alone is 0.1% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl Fischer method.

13. (New) A method for producing tantalum or niobium powder according to claim 9, wherein the metal salt is niobium potassium fluoride, and the moisture percentage in potassium fluoride alone is 0.1% by mass or less, as determined by the Karl Fischer method.